

Congressional Resolution on Iraq

Q. Mr. President, are you going to send Congress your proposed resolution today?

The President. I am.

Q. And are you asking for a blank check, sir?

The President. I am sending suggested language for a resolution. I want—I've asked for Congress' support to enable the administration to keep the peace. And we look forward to a good, constructive debate in Congress. I appreciate the fact that the leadership recognizes we've got to move before the elections. I appreciate the strong support we're getting from both Republicans and Democrats and look forward to working with them.

Q. Mr. President, how important is it that that resolution give you an authorization to use force?

The President. That will be part of the resolution, the authorization to use force. If you want to keep the peace, you've got to have the authorization to use force. But it's—this will be—this is a chance for Congress to indicate support. It's a chance for Congress to say, "We support the administration's ability to keep the peace." That's what this is all about.

Q. Will regime change be part of it?

The President. Yes. That's the policy of the Government.

Campbell, congratulations, you got two questions in one day.

Q. Thank you, sir.

The President. And it wasn't even a followup. That's a brilliant performance.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A reporter referred to Hans Blix, Executive Chairman, United Nations Monitoring, Verification, and Inspection Commission for Iraq.

**Remarks Following a Visit With
Homeland Security Employees and
an Exchange With Reporters**

September 19, 2002

Homeland Security Legislation

The President. I appreciate Governor Ridge giving me a tour of this important facil-

ity. It's—we're working hard to make sure that we do everything we can to protect our homeland, coordinate among the various agencies, until we get a Department of Homeland Security.

Our House of Representatives has passed a good bill. The Senate is struggling with a bill. I urge the Senate to get a bill to my desk before they go home, a bill which gives us the flexibility necessary to move the right people to the right place in order to better protect the homeland, a bill which safeguards prerogatives that former Presidents have had in regards to national security matters. We're at a time of war, and the Senate shouldn't be making it harder for an administration, whether it be this one or future administrations, to do their job. Nor should the Senate be trying to strip this administration or future administrations from any prerogatives or power that former administrations have had.

We're aware that there is hard work on the Senate floor by Senator Gramm of Texas, a Republican, and Senator Miller of Georgia, a Democrat, to develop a comprehensive substitute for a piece of legislation which we believe is flawed. We hope the Senate would work with Senator Gramm and Senator Miller, vote that bill off the Senate floor, so we can get it to a conference committee and get the bill to my desk before they go home.

This is a really important piece of legislation. America is still threatened. There are enemies out there which still hate us. We must do everything we can to secure the homeland today and, at the same time, leave a legacy behind so future Presidents and future Members of Congress can deal with what will be an ongoing threat to our freedoms and to our people.

But anyway, I appreciate your hospitality, Governor. You've got some fine people here working hard on behalf of the American people. It's wonderful to see you all again today. Thank you.

Q. Is one vote enough—is Zell Miller's vote enough on this compromise?

The President. [*Inaudible*]—I'm not counting votes. I'm just calling on the right—calling on the Senate to do the right thing for the American people.

Iraq and the United Nations

Q. Did you hear the Iraqi Foreign Minister's speech at the U.N., sir? What did you think of it?

The President. I didn't hear it, but let me guess: "The United States is guilty. The world doesn't understand. We don't have any weapons of mass destruction." It's the same old song and dance that we've heard for 11 long years. And the United Nations Security Council must show backbone, must step up and hold this regime to account. Otherwise, the United States and some of our friends will do so.

For the sake of peace, for the sake of world security, for the sake of a viable United Nations, they must act. And if they don't have it in their will to do so, if they're not willing to fashion a resolution which is new and different and strong and holds Iraq to account, holds them to the agreements they have made, the United States will be willing to do so.

Q. Should the American people prepare themselves for war with Iraq, Mr. President?

The President. The American people must understand the serious threat which Iraq places on America. We've learned after September the 11th that oceans no longer protect us from an enemy. We also know full well this is a man who has invaded two countries; this is a man who has poisoned his own people; this is a man who's poisoned his neighbors; this is a man who says that Stalin is his hero; this is a man who hates; this is a man who doesn't believe in freedom; this is a man who has weapons of mass destruction and says he doesn't. He poses a serious threat to the American people. And the first step is to get the United Nations to prove to the world whether it's going to be relevant or whether it's going to be a League of Nations, irrelevant.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:43 p.m. at the Nebraska Avenue Homeland Security Complex. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A reporter referred to Foreign Minister Naji Sabri Ahmad al-Hadithi of Iraq.

Proclamation 7595—National POW/MIA Recognition Day, 2002

September 19, 2002

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Throughout American history, many men and women have bravely served in our military and sacrificed much to preserve our country and protect the democratic ideals that make our Nation a beacon of hope. Some of those who answered the call to service were captured in conflict and imprisoned by our enemies; and many remain missing in action.

Each year on National POW/MIA Recognition Day, we honor those Americans who were prisoners of war and recognize them for the courage and determination they showed in the face of unspeakable hardships. We also honor those who remain unaccounted for, especially remembering the sacrifices of their families who must courageously face each day without knowing the fate of their loved ones.

Nearly 60 years after the end of World War II, the fate of more than 78,000 Americans who fought in that conflict remains unknown. More than 8,100 from the Korean War are missing, more than 120 from the Cold War, more than 1,900 from the Vietnam War, and three from the Gulf War. These Americans, who dedicated their lives to preserving and protecting our freedoms, will never be forgotten.

On September 20, 2002, the flag of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia will be flown over the White House, the Capitol, the Departments of State, Defense, and Veterans Affairs, the Selective Service System Headquarters, the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, U.S. military installations, national cemeteries, and other locations across our country. With this observance, we reaffirm our commitment to those who have suffered the horrors of enemy captivity, to those who have yet to return from battle, and to their